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Enhanced Role of the Victim in BNSS from CRPC: The Legislative Changes

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The shift from the Criminal Procedure Code (CrPC) 1973 to the Bharatiya Nagarik Suraksha Sanhita (BNSS), 2023, marks a significant and much-needed change in India's criminal justice system. For the first time, the law places the victim at the centre of the process, recognising their right to be heard, to appeal, to be compensated, and to take part in legal proceedings that directly affect them. These are welcome steps toward a more balanced and humane justice system. However, some critical gaps remain. The current framework does not adequately address the broader rehabilitation needs of victims, such as psychological support and long-term recovery assistance. The new law also introduces a witness protection scheme, but without clear guidelines for its enforcement, its impact may remain limited. To truly support victims and strengthen their role in the justice system, further changes are necessary. Victims should have the right to ask questions during trial, stay updated on the investigation, and request that their case be heard closer to where they live to reduce hardship. The appointment of dedicated District Victim and Witness Protection Officers (DVWPOs) would also help ensure consistent implementation and monitoring of victim and witness rights. This paper is focused on a doctrinal research method with a secondary data method approach. If these practical suggestions are incorporated into the BNSS, the law has the potential to become a truly victim-oriented and justice-driven reform.

Keywords: BNSS, CRPC, victim rights, compensation, witness protection.

INTRODUCTION

For decades, India's criminal justice system has primarily centred around the rights of the accused, often sidelining the voice and concerns of the victim. While the principle of "innocent until proven guilty" remains vital to any fair legal system, this focus has historically come at the cost of meaningful victim participation, support, and justice.

The traditional criminal justice system in India has long been faulted for its major emphasis on the accused and state prosecutorial roles, frequently sidelining the victim into a secondary position. Although some victim-oriented provisions were in place, their implementation and effectiveness have frequently been inadequate in tending to the needs and interests of individuals who have been harmed as a result of criminal behaviour. This change recognises that victims of crime suffer severe injury, and that the criminal justice system must do more than merely punish offenders; it must also give victims a voice, support, and remedy. The acknowledgement and bolstering of victim rights in India have gradually changed over time.

Given the severity of the situation and the rising crime rate, the Indian Supreme Court and Parliament began to focus on the rights of crime victims and witness protection by issuing rulings and amending the Code of Criminal Procedure. This changing conception of justice is embodied in the Bharatiya Nagarik Suraksha Sanhita 2023 (BNSS), which was passed in order to modernise and reform India's criminal system. A major step forward in this approach has been made with the introduction of a number of legislative reforms that are explicitly intended to strengthen the role of the victim.

This research paper aims to dissect these crucial amendments, analysing their scope, potential impact, and significance in shaping a more victim-centric criminal justice system in India. It will examine the improved rights and safeguards provided to victims under the BNSS, contrasting them with the relevant clauses in the CRPC and evaluating how well they can empower victims and promote the administration of justice. A paradigm shift¹ from an accused-centric to a victim-sensitive criminal procedural framework is signalled by the BNSS. The legislative modifications

¹ 'READY RECKONER VICTIM CENTRIC APPROACH' (BPR&D, 29 January 2024)
<<https://bprd.nic.in/uploads/pdf/202401290405007247605VictimCentricApproachUpdated.pdf>> accessed 25 August 2025

are a reflection of India's larger endeavour to guarantee victims' dignity, justice, and fairness across the legal system.

KEY PROVISIONS IN BNSS THAT MENTION THE VICTIM'S ROLE

Definition of a Victim –

Section 2(1)(y):² It refers to anyone who has been harmed or lost anything as a result of the accused person's actions or inaction, including the victim's guardian or legal heir.

Victim's Right to Information Under BNSS, victims are given stronger rights to be kept informed:

Section 193(3):³ This section of BNSS mandates that the police officer inform the victim about the progress of the investigation at regular intervals. Victims are now legally entitled to updates regarding:

- Arrest of the Accused.
- Filing of Chargesheets.
- Status of Bail Applications.
- Closure of Investigations.

The enhanced Role of the victim under the Bharatiya Nagarik Suraksha Sanhita, 2023⁴ (BNSS), India's new criminal procedure code replacing the CrPC 1973, represents a significant shift in India's criminal justice approach, bringing it more in line with victim-centric models. Here's an overview of the key legislative changes that enhance the Role of the victim:

Section 184:⁵ **Medical Examination of a Victim of Rape:** When investigating rape or attempted rape, a government hospital doctor (or another registered doctor if unavailable) must examine the woman, with her or a legal representative's consent, within 24 hours of the report. The doctor must promptly document details like her identity, injuries, samples taken, mental state, and examination times. The investigating officer must receive the report within seven days

² Bharatiya Nagarik Suraksha Sanhita 2023, s 2(1)(y)

³ Bharatiya Nagarik Suraksha Sanhita 2023, s 193(3)

⁴ Bharatiya Nagarik Suraksha Sanhita 2023

⁵ Bharatiya Nagarik Suraksha Sanhita 2023, s 184

for submission to the Magistrate, along with a statement of the grounds for the findings and a confirmation of permission. No examination is allowed without valid consent.

Section 396:⁶ Victim Compensation Scheme: State Governments, with the Centre, must create a scheme to fund compensation for victims needing rehabilitation. Courts or victims can request compensation, even if the offender isn't found or is acquitted. The Legal Services Authority will decide the amount within two months and may provide immediate medical help. This compensation is separate from any fines awarded under other legal provisions. BNSS continues and strengthens victim compensation provisions. It mandates that the state government prepare and notify the compensation scheme for victims of loss or injury due to a crime. Courts are empowered to direct interim compensation during the pendency of the trial.

Section 397:⁷ Treatment of victims: All hospitals—whether public or private and regardless of ownership (Central/State Government, local bodies, or private individuals) are legally required to:

- Provide Immediate and Free Medical Help.⁸
- Hospitals must offer immediate first-aid and necessary medical treatment free of cost to victims of specific serious offences without any delay or preconditions.
- Inform the Police Immediately.
- When a hospital receives a victim of such offences, it must immediately inform the police about the incident.

Applicable Offences Covered: This duty applies to victims of the following offences:

Under Bhartiya Nyaya Sanhita 2023⁹ –

- **Sections 64 to 68:** Offences involving sexual assault and abuse.
- **Sections 70 to 71:** Likely includes offences such as trafficking and exploitation.

⁶ Bharatiya Nagarik Suraksha Sanhita 2023, s 396

⁷ Bharatiya Nagarik Suraksha Sanhita 2023, s 397

⁸ Dr. Ajay Kumar Singh and Dr. Vinay Kumar Kashyap, 'PROTECTION TO VICTIMS OF CRIME AND WITNESSES IN NEW CRIMINAL LAWS: A COMPARATIVE STUDY' (2024) 16(1) DLR

<<https://www.dehradunlawreview.com/wp-content/uploads/2025/03/2.pdf>> accessed 25 August 2025

⁹ Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita 2023

- **Section 124(1):** Possibly covers aggravated or repeat sexual offences (exact definitions based on the law).

In the Protection of Children from Sexual Offences (POCSO)¹⁰ Act 2012 –

- **Section 4:** Penetrative Sexual Assault
- **Section 6:** Aggravated Penetrative Sexual Assault
- **Section 8:** Sexual Assault
- **Section 10:** Aggravated Sexual Assault

In addition to requiring legal reporting, which helps to prompt legal action, this guarantees immediate medical assistance for victims of violent and sexual offences, particularly minors.

Section 18:¹¹ Public Prosecutors: If the victim wishes, they can choose someone to support them during the prosecution process, and the court can allow that.

Section 176:¹² Procedure to the Investigation: Its proviso says, furtherly, in connection with a rape offence, a female police officer must, to the greatest extent possible, record the victim's statement at her home or at a location of her choosing, in front of her parents, guardian, close family members, or a local social worker. The statement may be recorded using any audio-video electronic device, including a mobile phone.

Section 230:¹³ Supply to the Accused of Copy of the Police Report and other Documents: In cases based on a police report, the Magistrate must, within 14 days of the accused's appearance, provide free copies to the accused and the victim's lawyer (if any) of the police report, FIR, witness statements, confessions, and other documents sent with the report. The Magistrate may decide what parts to share if some witness statements are restricted. Digital copies or court inspection may be allowed for large documents instead of physical copies.

¹⁰ Protection of Children from Sexual Offences Act 2012

¹¹ Bharatiya Nagarik Suraksha Sanhita 2023, s 18

¹² Bharatiya Nagarik Suraksha Sanhita 2023, s 176

¹³ Bharatiya Nagarik Suraksha Sanhita 2023, s 230

Section 293:¹⁴ Disposal of Cases: If a case is resolved under Section 292, the Court will grant compensation to the victim as agreed and decide the punishment. It may consider probation, admonition, or other legal provisions before finalising the sentence.

Section 360:¹⁵ Withdrawal from Prosecution: Provided further that no Court shall allow such withdrawal without letting the victim be heard in the case.

“By acknowledging and defining the Role of victims at several phases of the criminal justice process, the Bharatiya Nagarik Suraksha Sanhita, 2023, greatly improves victim participation. Victims can now actively engage in the trial and pre-trial phases, especially in situations involving significant offences. The law recognises their right to freely hire legal counsel to guarantee that their interests are adequately represented. An essential step toward a more victim-centric approach in the legal system has also been taken with the explicit right of victims to be heard during bail hearings in cases involving sexual offences, serious bodily harm, and other horrific crimes.”

Several innovative elements have been incorporated in the Bharatiya Nagarik Suraksha Sanhita, 2023, to bolster victim rights and support systems. Thanks to technological improvements, victims can now file FIRs online and record statements or depositions by video conference or electronic means, which lessens the emotional toll of frequent in-person appearances. To ensure more transparency, victims can also use digital case management tools to monitor the progress of their claims. Additionally, by requiring victim input and approval before any agreement is signed, the BNSS improves victim participation in plea bargaining processes. To provide a more compassionate and inclusive justice system, special protections are also provided to vulnerable victims, including women, children, and people with disabilities, through measures including in-camera trials, the presence of support persons, and access to psychological help.

COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF CRPC TO BNSS

Victim’s Position in the Criminal Justice System:¹⁶ Traditionally, the criminal justice system has been primarily accused-centric, with its focus rooted in the doctrine of the presumption of innocence, whereby an accused is deemed innocent until proven guilty. In this

¹⁴ Bharatiya Nagarik Suraksha Sanhita 2023, s 293

¹⁵ Bharatiya Nagarik Suraksha Sanhita 2023, s 360

¹⁶ Singh (n 8)

framework, the State was presumed to represent the interests of victims, ensuring their safety and protection. Consequently, victims of crime were not given independent recognition or rights within the legal process. However, with the rising crime rate and the growing acknowledgement of the sufferings and vulnerabilities of victims, the Supreme Court of India and the Parliament have shifted their attention towards victims' rights and witness protection. This paradigm shift has led to the development of Victimology as a distinct branch of criminal law, advocating for the central placement of victims in the justice delivery system, especially those who are impoverished and unable to afford legal representation.

In contrast, the criminal law framework has long recognised the right of an indigent accused to free legal aid, as mandated under Section 304 of the Code of Criminal Procedure. This imbalance has underscored the need to empower victims through similar legal entitlements.

Responding to this need, the Indian Parliament has recently enacted three progressive statutes: The Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita, 2023, The Bharatiya Nagarik Suraksha Sanhita, 2023, and the Bharatiya Sakshya Adhiniyam, 2023.¹⁷ These legislations mark a significant step toward a victim-centric justice system, aiming to ensure justice for victims, protection for witnesses, and more equitable participation in the legal process.

Right of Victims to Be Heard on Withdrawal of Criminal Cases:¹⁸ Under Section 360 of the Bharatiya Nagarik Suraksha Sanhita, 2023, victims of crime now have the statutory right to be heard before any criminal case against the accused is withdrawn. This provision marks a pivotal reform in Indian criminal law by empowering victims to oppose withdrawal petitions, especially where there is a credible threat to the victim's safety or where justice may be compromised.

Earlier, the criminal justice system did not require the victim's input at this stage, giving the State unilateral discretion in withdrawing cases. A notable instance is the **Abdul Karim v State of Karnataka**¹⁹ case (popularly known as the Raj Kumar abduction case, where the victim's father had to approach the Supreme Court to stop the State from withdrawing cases against

¹⁷ Bharatiya Sakshya Adhiniyam 2023

¹⁸ Singh (n 8)

¹⁹ *Abdul Karim v State of Karnataka & Ors* AIR 2001 SC 116

Veerappan's associates. The Supreme Court, acknowledging the victim's grievance, held that such withdrawals without victim consultation undermine public trust and police morale.

The new law ensures that victims no longer need to resort to extraordinary measures like approaching the apex court. Instead, they are granted a legal platform to raise objections, thereby strengthening victims' rights and the integrity of the criminal justice system.

Right of Victims to Appeal: Historically, the right to appeal in the criminal justice system primarily rested with the accused, particularly against orders of conviction or sentence. However, recognising the need for equitable rights, the Criminal Law Amendment Act, 2008, inserted a proviso to Section 372 of the Code of Criminal Procedure, enabling victims to appeal against orders of acquittal, inadequate sentence, or insufficient compensation, in alignment with the Malimath Committee's²⁰ recommendations on criminal justice reforms.

Building upon this principle, the recently enacted Bharatiya Nagarik Suraksha Sanhita, 2023, under Section 413, expressly affirms the victim's right to appeal against:

- An order of acquittal;
- A lesser sentence imposed upon the accused; or
- An insufficient compensation was awarded.

This provision addresses long-standing imbalances in the justice system by ensuring that victims have a meaningful role in appellate proceedings. It empowers them to challenge judicial outcomes they perceive as unjust and reinforces their faith in the rule of law, eliminating the need to seek extraordinary remedies before higher courts.

Right to Compensation:²¹ The *Bharatiya Nagarik Suraksha Sanhita, 2023*, under Section 396²², strengthens the victim's right to compensation, marking a shift from a punishment-centric model to one that also emphasises restoration, rehabilitation, and restitution of the

²⁰ Committee on Reforms of Criminal Justice System, *Report* (vol I, March 2003)

²¹ Shanaya Bhatnagar, 'ENHANCING VICTIM PROTECTION AND COMPENSATION FRAMEWORK IN INDIA: A COMPREHENSIVE ANALYSIS' (2024) 6(1) Indian Journal of Law and Legal Research <https://3fdef50c-add3-4615-a675-a91741bcb5c0.usrfiles.com/ugd/3fdef5_a6ba88a711674442b65ad2fa6ae981ae.pdf> accessed 25 August 2025

²² Bharatiya Nagarik Suraksha Sanhita 2023

‘Three Rs’ of victim justice. This aligns with the principle of *Status Quo Ante*, aiming to restore victims as closely as possible to the position they were in before the crime.

Key Features include –

State Compensation Schemes: Every state, in coordination with the central government, must formulate a compensation scheme for victims.

Role of Legal Services Authorities: The District or State Legal Services Authority decides the compensation amount when recommended by courts.

Victim-Initiated Claims: If no trial occurs (e.g., offender untraced), victims or their dependents can apply directly to the authorities for compensation.

Emergency Support: Authorities may provide first aid or medical care based on reports from SHOs or magistrates.

This is a notable enhancement over Section 357 CrPC, 1973, where only the court could award compensation post-trial. Section 396 broadens access and creates administrative avenues for relief, making victim rights more responsive and inclusive within the justice system.

In the case named *Ankush Shivaji Gaikwad v State of Maharashtra*,²³ the Supreme Court addressed victim compensation under Section 357 of the Cr.PC. The case stemmed from a 2006 incident where a dispute, triggered by a dog barking, escalated into a fatal altercation, resulting in Nilkanth Pawar’s death. The appellant’s murder conviction under Section 302 IPC was converted to culpable homicide under Section 304(2) IPC due to a lack of premeditation.

Mandatory Consideration: Courts must evaluate compensation in every criminal case, not as ancillary but additional to other sentences.

Assessment Criteria: Compensation should reflect the crime’s nature, the victim’s loss, and the accused’s paying capacity.

Reasoned Decisions: Courts must provide cogent reasons for denying compensation.

²³ *Ankush Shivaji Gaikwad v State of Maharashtra* (2013) 6 SCC 770

Victim-Centric Approach: The ruling emphasised victimology, ensuring victims are not forgotten in the justice system.

The Court remanded the case for reconsideration of compensation, reinforcing that Section 357 aims to lessen victims' losses through reasonable, non-arbitrary awards. This landmark judgment strengthened victim rights, urging courts to adopt a balanced, constructive approach to justice.

Treatment of Victims: Section 397 of the *Bharatiya Nagarik Suraksha Sanhita, 2023*, mandates free medical treatment for victims of offences listed under Sections 65, 66, 67 of the *Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita 2023*,²⁴ as well as for child victims under the POCSO Act,²⁵ 2012. Both government and private hospitals are legally obligated to provide such treatment without delay and must immediately notify the police.

This provision addresses the recurring issue where hospitals deny urgent care pending medico-legal formalities. The Supreme Court, in the landmark case *Parmanand Katara v Union of India*,²⁶ held that the right to emergency medical aid is a fundamental right under Article 21²⁷. It emphasised that no person should be denied treatment, as preservation of life is a core obligation in a welfare state.

Section 397 of BNSS reflects this constitutional principle by legally enforcing timely, life-saving care for all victims, regardless of procedural delays.

Right to File Complaint –

The right of a victim to file a complaint forms a foundational aspect of their access to justice. Under Section 154²⁸, and its equivalent Section 173 of the *Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita (BNSS) 2023*, police are legally obligated to register an FIR when informed of a cognizable offence. This duty is mandatory, reinforced by the Supreme Court in the landmark case *Lalita Kumari v State of UP*,²⁹ where it was held that police have no discretion if the offence is cognizable. BNSS

²⁴ Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita 2023

²⁵ Protection of Children from Sexual Offences Act 2012

²⁶ *Pt. Parmanand Katara v Union of India* AIR 1989 SC 2039

²⁷ Constitution of India 1950

²⁸ Code of Criminal Procedure 1973, s 154

²⁹ *Lalita Kumari v Government of UP & Ors* MANU/SC/1166/2013

further introduces progressive reforms such as *Zero FIR*,³⁰ allowing FIRs to be filed at any police station regardless of jurisdiction, and *Electronic FIRs*,³¹ enabling digital submissions, which greatly assist victims in urgent or sensitive cases. Additionally, if the police refuse to act, victims can escalate the matter to the Superintendent of Police under Section 154(3) CrPC or seek a Magistrate's intervention under Section 156(3) CrPC, mirrored in Section 175 of the BNSS.

Victims also have the right to file complaints directly with a Magistrate under Section 200 CrPC and can request their statements to be recorded before a Magistrate under Section 183 BNSS statements, which carry significant evidentiary value. Moreover, in sexual offence cases, laws mandate that female police officers record the victim's statement, ensuring a more sensitive and supportive process. These provisions collectively strengthen victim access, agency, and confidence in the criminal justice system.

Victim Representation in Proceedings: In 2020, the case represented the victim in proceedings, *Rekha Murarka v State of Bengal*.³² Rekha Murarka, the appellant, was the widow of Gyan Prakash Murarka, who was allegedly murdered on 16 January 2014. During the trial, she sought permission under Section 301 read with the proviso to Section 24(8) of the Code of Criminal Procedure (CrPC) to have her private counsel, which highlights these points.

- Advance oral arguments after the Public Prosecutor.
- Raise objections during cross-examination.
- Examine prosecution witnesses.
- Cross-examine defence witnesses

The Supreme Court dismissed the appeal, emphasising:

- Section 225 of the CrPC mandates that a sessions trial be conducted by a Public Prosecutor.
- The term “assist” in the proviso to Section 24(8) indicates a supportive role for the victim's counsel, not an active prosecutorial one.

³⁰ 'ANALYSIS OF THE BHARATIYA NAGARIK SURAKSHA SANHITA, 2023: REVOLUTIONIZING VICTIM RIGHTS AND PROCEDURAL JUSTICE' (*The Legal Lock*) <<https://thelegallock.com/analysis-of-the-bharatiya-nagarik-suraksha-sanhita-2023-revolutionizing-victim-rights-and-procedural-justice/>> accessed 27 August 2025

³¹ Akanksha, 'Zero FIR and e-FIR' (*Legal Service India*)

<<https://www.legalserviceindia.com/legal/article-17429-zero-fir-and-e-fir.html>> accessed 27 August 2025

³² *Rekha Murarka v State of Bengal* (2020) 2 SCC 474

Allowing the victim's counsel to conduct examinations or present oral arguments would disrupt the trial's balance and potentially compromise its fairness. However, the Court acknowledged that if the Public Prosecutor overlooks certain aspects, the victim's counsel can. The judgment clarifies that while victims have the right to engage private counsel, their role is limited to assisting the Public Prosecutor without direct participation in examinations or oral arguments. This ensures the primacy of the Public Prosecutor in conducting the trial, maintaining the integrity and fairness of the judicial process.

Victim Impact Statement: In *Mallikarjun Kodagali (Dead) v State of Karnataka*³³, the Supreme Court of India reinforced victims' rights under the proviso to Section 372 of the Cr.P.C., granting victims an independent statutory right to appeal against acquittals, convictions for lesser offences, or inadequate compensation without needing special leave. The case arose when Kodagali, a victim of an attack in 2009, appealed the acquittal of the accused, which the Karnataka High Court dismissed as non-maintainable, citing the proviso's post-offence enactment. The Supreme Court overruled this, emphasising victim-centric jurisprudence and the evolving recognition of victims' rights. It clarified that the proviso operates prospectively but applies to appeals filed after its 2009 amendment. The Court remanded the case to the High Court for a merits-based hearing, underscoring the importance of victims' voices in criminal proceedings to ensure justice and fairness.

CRITICAL ANALYSIS OF THE CONCEPT OF VICTIM VICTIM-CENTRIC APPROACH IN BNSS

The conversion from the Criminal Procedure Code 1973 to the Bharatiya Nagarik Suraksha Sanhita (BNSS) 2023 is an important shift in the Indian criminal justice system, one that is finally recognising the long-deserted role of victims. Usually, the system was overpoweringly accused-focused, tending to sideline the interests, voices, and rights of victims under the presumption that the state would stand in for them. However, this approach left victims disempowered and voiceless in processes that deeply affected their lives.

The new provisions within BNSS constitute a welcome and long-overdue correction. The victim's right to be heard in bail proceedings, plea bargains, and withdrawals of cases places their issues

³³ *Mallikarjun Kodagali (Dead) v State of Karnataka* AIR 2018 SC 5206

where they should have been all along, at the centre of justice. Formal standards of the rights to appeal, compensation, and involvement at different levels of the trial provide victims with the weapons to make themselves heard in a system that previously barely even noticed them.

Advances like Zero FIR and electronic FIRs are more than particulars, they're lifelines for people who might be too traumatised, isolated, or vulnerable to physically go to the police. These reforms are not merely about going digital, but also about human dignity, safety, access, and deconstructing barriers. But while these are to be appreciated, problems do persist. What matters is enforcement. “Laws may appear ideal in writing but fail in practical application”, there are lot of campaigns runs for to empower and giving new laws knowledge in police stations all-over the country but still there are deficiency in knowledge for the victim centric ideas and rules, they only understand the upper body of statutes and ignorant towards the base of it, if the cops (police officers) aren't educated, there's no legal assistance, or knowledge among citizens will be helpful. To add, marginalised community victims will continue to struggle within the system even with the new rights.

Effectively, BNSS is an ambitious and more comprehensive move towards a more balanced and human criminal justice system, one that not only punishes the offender but also elevates the one who was wronged. But for these assurances to be realised, we require consistent enforcement, public education, and a change of mindset within institutions from using the legal technicalities to true justice.

CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTION

The transition from the CrPC, 1973, to the BNSS, 2023, signifies a long-overdue shift in India's criminal justice landscape, one that finally places the victim at the centre of the process. By recognising their rights to be heard, to appeal, to receive compensation, and to be treated with dignity and care, the new framework acknowledges that justice is incomplete unless the needs of the victim are met. These reforms represent a move toward a more balanced, compassionate, and equitable system. However, the true test lies in their real-world execution. If supported by adequate training, infrastructure, and public awareness, the BNSS can transform victims from silent sufferers into empowered participants in the pursuit of justice.

Comprehensive Rehabilitation: Despite the progressive shift in victim compensation under the BNSS 2023, the framework still falls short of addressing the full variety of rehabilitation

needs. Compensation alone cannot heal the deep emotional and psychological wounds victims often endure. For truly holistic justice, future reforms must incorporate structured provisions for psychosocial support, trauma counselling, and long-term rehabilitation services. Only when the system acknowledges and supports both the legal and emotional journey of a victim can justice be considered truly complete and humane.

Witness Protection: While the BNSS takes an important step forward by acknowledging the need for witness protection, it falls short by not laying down clear and actionable implementation guidelines. Witnesses play a crucial role in the criminal justice process, and their safety directly impacts the strength and credibility of the trial. Without a robust and transparent framework, including timely relocation, anonymity, and security measures, the scheme risks being ineffective. To truly empower and protect those who come forward with the truth, future amendments must provide a comprehensive roadmap for the practical enforcement of witness protection measures.

- By a slight alteration in BNSS, the victim must be granted freedom to pose a question and bring relevant evidence before the trial court.
- The victim must be enabled to obtain information regarding the day-to-day investigation so that he/she may get informed about the case status.
- The victim must have the right to approach the court for directing his/her case where they stay, rather than a trial case at the crime location, to prevent any sort of inconvenience to the victim.
- Every District should have a District victim and witness protection officer (DVWPO, who shall supervise the victim and witnesses, as well as the police officer who has been designated at the police station for the protection of victims and witnesses.

If the above-mentioned suggestions are incorporated in the new Criminal Law, it would be very useful in the protection of the rights of victims of crime and witnesses.